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**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD  
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

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Landmark/District: **Saint Elizabeths Hospital Historic District**      (x) Agenda

Address: **1100 Alabama Avenue/ 2700 Martin  
Luther King Jr. Avenue SE**

Meeting Date: **February 28, 2013**      (x) New construction  
Case Number: **13-032**

Staff Reviewer: **Tim Dennée**

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The applicants, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development and the Department of General Services, along with architects Davis Brody Bond LLP, request the Board's conceptual review of a proposal to construct a food pavilion with a rooftop amphitheater in the landscaped area associated with the 1902 residential buildings ("the Richardson group") along the Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue frontage of the East Campus.

The Board first reviewed the proposal in November, and since that time, the plans have been revised.

The biggest change was the removal of the north ramp, substantially decreasing the structure's total length, while retaining the southern ramp that would lead from the direction of Congress Heights. The intention was to reduce the pavilion's footprint and improve views across the "front yard" of the campus while retaining most of the space covered by the roof, as well as the performance space atop the roof. Arguably the most important view is that straight into the Maple Quad, the Redwood Drive alignment, to the cupola atop the Nichols Building. The north end of the pavilion has been pulled back more or less to that axis.<sup>1</sup>

Another important revision was the shifting of the structure slightly counterclockwise and nearer Sycamore Drive, which parallels MLK. This puts the pavilion nearer the food-truck parking and would obviate the need for much additional paving of the landscape. There has also been an effort to reduce the degree to which the landscape would otherwise be modified with paving and low walls.

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<sup>1</sup> This may also prove functionally advantageous, because there is a chance that the Department of Homeland Security may restore limited use by its employees of the tunnel beneath Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue. The tunnel would have been filled in and built over in the original scheme, but the present layout permits some flexibility to allow for that eventuality.

More of the underside of the pavilion has been enclosed, for food service and perhaps consumption, at the request of the community. But the height of the ceiling relative to grade has been increased, allowing for more visual permeability through the structure.

The legal standard for new construction in a historic district is slightly different from that for additions, alterations and repairs to historic buildings. In the latter instance, the standard is compatibility with the character of the historic district and the subject property. New construction, on the other hand, *must not be incompatible* with the character of the historic district and immediate context. While the materials proposed—ultra high-performance concrete, exposed wood and fabric—are a departure from the characteristic exterior materials of the historic campus, the idea of a sculptural structure within the landscape of the campus’s front yard is not incompatible with the character of the district. The reduction in the length was key to making the pavilion more of an object in the landscape, as opposed to dominating the landscape and the frontage.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends approval of the concept as not incompatible with the character of the historic district.*